

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1-22 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A holding method for holding contamination preventing method during the conveyance of a recording medium of an image forming apparatus in which the recording medium is ~~held while~~ conveyed and an image is formed on the recording medium, said method comprising:

a holding step of for holding the recording medium by a holding member without changing a held portion of the recording medium; and

a change step of for changing ~~[[a]]~~ the held portion of the recording medium held by the holding member when ~~the holding time in the~~ a duration of said holding step exceeds a predetermined time.

2. (Currently Amended) The holding contamination preventing method according to claim 1, wherein the change step is performed in such a manner that when the ~~holding time of the recording medium~~ duration of said holding step exceeds the predetermined time, the recording medium is fed by a predetermined distance, so that the held portion held by the holding member is changed to another portion.

3. (Currently Amended) The holding contamination preventing method according to claim 1, wherein the change step is performed in such a manner that when the ~~holding time of the recording medium~~ duration of said holding step exceeds the

predetermined time, the recording medium is fed by a variable distance, so that the held portion held by the holding member is changed to another portion.

4. (Currently Amended) The holding ~~contamination preventing~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the change step is performed in such a manner that, upon reception of an image formation start command, the recording medium is returned to a predetermined position before starting an image formation.

5. (Currently Amended) A holding method for holding ~~contamination preventing method during the conveyance of~~ a recording medium of an image forming apparatus in which the recording medium is ~~held while~~ conveyed and an image is formed on the recording medium, said method comprising:

a holding step of ~~for~~ holding the recording medium by a holding member without changing a held portion of the recording medium; and

a cut-off step of ~~for~~ cutting off the held portion ~~a contaminated portion of the recording medium due to holding of the recording medium~~ held by the holding member when ~~the holding time in the~~ a duration of said holding step ~~reaches~~ exceeds a predetermined time ~~before performing an image formation.~~

6. (Currently Amended) An image forming method for forming an image on a recording medium by a recording means, ~~A contamination preventing method during the conveyance of a recording medium of an image forming apparatus in which the~~

~~recording medium is held while conveyed and an image is formed on the recording medium, said method comprising:~~

~~a holding step of for holding the recording medium by a holding member without changing a held portion of the recording medium; and~~

~~a conveyance step of for conveying a contaminated portion of the recording medium until the held portion of the recording medium held by the holding member is passed through the recording means, when a duration of said holding step exceeds a predetermined time; and due to holding of the recording medium by the holding member when the holding time in the holding step reaches a predetermined time as well as a non-contaminated portion continuous to the contaminated portion, so that image formation is performed on a portion after the conveyed portion~~

~~an image forming step of forming an image on a recording medium by the recording means.~~

7. (Currently Amended) A holding method for holding contamination preventing method during the conveyance of a recording medium of an image forming apparatus in which the recording medium is ~~held while~~ conveyed and an image is formed on the recording medium, said method comprising:

~~a holding step of for holding the recording medium by a holding member without changing a held portion of the recording medium; and~~

~~a holding force change step of for changing a holding force of the recording medium by the holding member, so as to change a distortion amount of the holding member, when a duration of said holding step exceeds an intrusion amount of the holding~~

member into the recording medium when the holding time in the holding step reaches a predetermined time.

8. (Currently Amended) The holding ~~contamination preventing~~ method according to claim 7, wherein the holding force change step is performed in such a manner that upon reception of an image formation start command, the holding force and the distortion amount ~~intrusion amount with respect to the recording medium~~ are returned to the previous states before performing an image formation.

9. (Currently Amended) A holding method for holding ~~contamination preventing method during the conveyance of~~ a recording medium of an image forming apparatus in which the recording medium is ~~held while~~ conveyed and an image is formed on the recording medium, said method comprising:

a holding step of ~~for~~ holding the recording medium by a holding member without changing a held portion of the recording medium; and

a holding force release step of ~~for~~ releasing a holding force of the ~~recording medium by the~~ holding member when a duration of said ~~the holding time in the~~ holding step exceeds ~~reaches~~ a predetermined time.

10. (Currently Amended) The holding ~~contamination preventing~~ method according to claim 9, wherein the holding force release step is performed in such a manner that upon reception of an image formation start command, the holding force ~~and the~~

~~intrusion amount with respect to the recording medium are~~ is returned to the previous state
states before performing an image formation.

11. (Currently Amended) A holding method for holding ~~contamination preventing method during the conveyance of~~ a recording medium of an image forming apparatus in which the recording medium is ~~held while~~ conveyed and an image is formed on the recording medium, said method comprising:

a holding step of ~~for~~ holding the recording medium by a holding member without changing a held portion; and

a conveyance/holding step of ~~for~~ conveying the recording medium and holding a non-image portion by the holding member when ~~the holding time in the a~~ duration of said holding step exceeds reaches a predetermined time, wherein an image is not formed on the non-image portion.

12. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus ~~having a conveying unit for conveying a recording medium through an image formation block~~, said apparatus comprising:

an image formation block for forming an image on a recording medium;

a holding member for holding the recording medium ~~when conveying the recording medium through the image formation block~~;

a conveying unit for conveying the recording medium held by said holding member through said image formation block; and

control means for performing control in such a manner that a contact portion of the recording medium contacted by said ~~held by the~~ holding member is ~~maintained only for a predetermined time and is~~ changed to another contact portion ~~from time to time~~ when the contact portion of the recording medium contacted by said holding member has not been changed for a predetermined time.

13. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that when a duration of ~~holding time~~ holding the recording medium by the holding member exceeds a predetermined time, the recording medium is conveyed by a predetermined distance by the conveying unit.

14. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that when a duration of ~~holding time~~ holding the recording medium by the holding member exceeds a predetermined time, the recording medium is conveyed by ~~[[a]]~~ an indefinite distance by the conveying unit.

15. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus having a conveying unit for conveying a recording medium through an image formation block, said apparatus comprising:

a holding member for holding the recording medium;

an image formation block for forming an image on the recording medium held by said holding member; and

a cut-off means for cutting off a contact portion of the recording medium contacted by said holding member when the contact portion of the recording medium contacted by said holding member has not changed for a predetermined time.

~~The image forming apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that when a holding time holding the recording medium by the holding member exceeds a predetermined time, a contaminated portion of the recording member contaminated by the holding member is cut off before performing an image formation.~~

16. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The image forming apparatus comprising:
an image formation block for forming an image on a recording medium;
a holding member for holding the recording medium;
a conveying unit for conveying the recording medium held by said holding member through said image formation block; and
control means for performing control in such a manner that said conveying unit conveys the recording medium until a contact portion of the recording medium contacted by said holding member passes through said image formation block before performing an image formation, when a contact portion of the recording medium contacted by said holding member has not changed for a predetermined time.

~~according to claim 12, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that when a holding member exceeds a predetermined time, a contaminated portion of the~~

~~recording member contaminated by the holding member is conveyed additionally before performing an image formation.~~

17. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim ~~12~~ 15, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that upon reception of an image formation start command, the recording medium is returned to a predetermined position before performing an image formation.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The image forming apparatus comprising:
an image formation block for forming an image on a recording medium;
a holding member for holding the recording medium;
a conveying unit for conveying the recording medium held by said holding member through said image formation block; and
control means for performing control in such a manner that a holding force of holding the recording medium by said holding member is changed, so as to change a distortion amount of said holding member, when a contact portion of the recording medium contacted by said holding member has not been changed for a predetermined time.
~~according to claim 12, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that when a holding time holding the recording medium by the holding member exceeds a predetermined time, pressure of the holding member against the recording medium is changed and an intrusion amount of the holding member into the recording medium is changed.~~

19. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that upon reception of an image formation start command, the holding force of holding pressure of the holding member against the recording medium by said ~~and the intrusion amount of the holding member is into the recording medium~~ are returned to the previous state ~~states~~ before performing an image formation.

20. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The image forming apparatus comprising:
an image formation block for forming an image on a recording medium;
a holding member for holding the recording medium;
a conveying unit for conveying the recording medium held by said holding member through said image formation block; and
control means for performing control in such a manner that said holding member is separated from the recording medium when a contact portion of the recording medium contacted by said holding member has not changed for a predetermined time.
~~according to claim 12, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that when a holding time holding the recording medium by the holding member exceeds a predetermined time, the holding member is separated from the recording medium so as to release the pressure of the holding member against the recording medium.~~

21. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that upon reception of an image formation start command, ~~the~~ a pressure of the holding member against the

recording medium and ~~the~~ an intrusion amount of the holding member into the recording medium are returned to the previous states before performing an image formation.

22. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the control means performs control in such a manner that when a holding time of holding the recording medium by the holding member exceeds a predetermined time, the recording medium is conveyed and the holding member is made to hold a non-image portion.

23. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the holding member is a roller or pad.

24. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the image formation block performs recording on the recording medium using an ink jet recording head for discharging ink.